

Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, 2010 Winner

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Toehold

By: Margot Wizansky

Every day you make the choice to live
on the slippery ledge, where you almost always
fail to find a toehold, mesmerized as you are
by the gelid clarity of water or the far-off blow
of some blue-green radiance, the steely whistle
of work and money, the softer mist of love,
everything draws you-the cold burn seizing
anyone who stands up in the boat. Paddle
through the irresistible archway. Take a piece
of the iceberg to chill your cocktail. It can
roll over you. Virtue will carry you only so far
and help never comes fast enough.

About the author

Margot Wizansky is a painter and poet, with poems in journals such as Poetry East, Lumina, Tar River Review, Quarterly West, and several anthologies, including Beyond Forgetting: Poetry and Prose about Alzheimer's Disease and a poem in the Cancer Poetry Project's second anthology. She also has edited two anthologies, Mercy of Tides: Poems for a Beach House (2003), and Rough Places Plain: Poems of the Mountains (2006). In 2008, she won the Writers @ Work Poetry Fellowship competition. Margot transcribed the oral history Don't Look Them in the Eye: Love, Life, and Jim Crow, the story of Emerson Stamps, grandson of slaves, told in his words and her poems.

Judge: Lynn Emanuel